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# Gadhafi Rule Seen in Peril Following Military Setbacks

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CAIRO, March 26—Devastated by a battlefield rout in Chad, Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi may be losing control of his government and military establishment, prompting some western analysts here to predict that conditions are more ripe than ever for Gadhafi's forced removal.

Western officials monitoring reports from Chad and Egyptian officials in charge of debriefing two Libyan Air Force officers who defected earlier this month aboard their C130 transport plane have sketched a portrait of unpaid Libyan soldiers in a state of near mutiny in Chad, of Libyan pilots dropping their bombs harmlessly in the Chadian desert and of a Libyan diplomat confessing in a foreign capital that no one is in charge at home.

"The real Gadhafi-bashers say this is the end for Gadhafi—he is on the slippery slope—this is it," said one western official.

Others say Gadhafi's survival now depends on whether he can save face inside his own country after Libya suffered a decisive military defeat Sunday when Chadian troops overran the northern town of Ouadi Doum, where Libya had maintained a strategic military base built around the largest hard-sur-

face runway in northern Chad. In the wake of this defeat, Libyan troops were reported by sources here to have abandoned their last remaining stronghold of Faya Largeau, 90 miles to the southeast.

"The Libyans are just now figuring out what is wrong and they can't fix it," said a senior western military analyst. Having lost more than 1,200 soldiers and a massive arsenal of weapons, munitions, tanks and aircraft at Ouadi Doum, "the Libyan soldiers just don't have the stomach for it," he added.

"The real problem is that Libyan troops in Chad were not convinced of the justice of their cause," the analyst said, adding that the lopsided ratio of Libyan casualties to minimal losses on the Chadian side "depicts panic and soldiers being shot in the back while running away."

Also, as in the April 1986 U.S. bombing raid

on Libya, western officials say there is evidence in the Libyan defeat of a major "failure" and breakdown in the command structure of Libya's armed forces and "real gaps" in the training level of Libyan combat troops.

Libyan Air Force pilots in combat missions this winter refused to risk flying their aircraft on low-level bombing missions, according to western military sources. "They've been dropping napalm at 20,000 feet," said one western official, "and while this is awfully pretty at night, it is not very effective" against the highly mobile Chadian forces.

Meanwhile, two Libyan defectors who flew their transport plane to an airfield in upper Egypt March 3 have told their Egyptian debriefers that the Libyan Army has been seized by "very, very bad" morale and an unwillingness among officers to take any more casualties in Chad.

In addition, the defectors reported that administrative chaos in the Libyan government prevented paychecks from reaching thousands of soldiers in the Libyan forces in Chad, thus exacerbating their discontent. Half of those forces are made up of recently called-up reservists described by these sources as being opposed to fighting a war for ill-defined objectives on foreign soil.

"They felt they were taking part in a crime against the Libyan people and that because of the number of Libyans being killed, they were taking part in immoral and criminal activity in Chad," said one western official in characterizing the defectors' accounts.

Egyptian radio broadcasts this week have urged the Libyan military to mutiny and the civilian population to rise up against Gadhafi.

One of the most surprising reports to reach western intelligence officials this week came from Sudan, where the Foreign Ministry had called in a senior Libyan diplomat to protest Libyan violations of Sudan's territory in moving troops into Chad.

In the course of the private diplomatic exchange, "The Libyan official said Gadhafi had lost control of the entire situation—both in Chad and in the government in Libya," according to one knowledgeable source. A second western official confirmed that the report emanated from intelligence sources in Sudan, but he could not elab-

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orate on the identity of the Libyan official or the relative weight being given to his reported remarks in western capitals.

At home, Gadhafi is said to have alienated a large segment of his government by moving its offices out of Tripoli on the Mediterranean coast into the desert at Hun, 300 miles southeast.

"This has turned out to be a horribly disruptive move and Libyan government officials are very upset," said one western official. Gadhafi "has turned them into commuters. They go down to Hun a few days a week where they are housed in trailers—communications are difficult—and they use any excuse to go back to Tripoli to their families."

Gadhafi "doesn't stay in one place more than a day," the official said, out of fear that another U.S. bombing raid or an internal dissident might breach his extensive personal security apparatus and assassinate him.

Western officials said that in coming weeks they will closely monitor Libya's military hierarchy and civilian leadership for signs that some of these officials might seek foreign support for a new coup attempt against Gadhafi.

Last year, the Reagan administration pursued an initially secret disinformation campaign aimed at destabilizing the Libyan leader. The deception effort was designed to convince Gadhafi that he faced serious internal opposition and that he was about to be attacked again by U.S. bombers. The campaign, outlined in a three-page memo by then national security affairs advisor John M. Poindexter, included giving false information to the news media.